Measures *for* disinvestment already taken include setting up of Disinvestment Commission to spearhead the implementation of the programme, closing down of 5 Sugar Mills and setting up of De-regulation Commission.

Measures already taken for decentralisation and restructuring include transfer of 80,000 government employees belonging to the health, water supply, civil supply and irrigation Departments and 3,00,000 Primary teachers to Local bodies, amendment of appropriate Act/Rules to enable Local Panchayats to operate and maintain tube wells, introduction of a hiring system for Teachers and Health workers so as to reduce the unit cost of providing such services, abolition of 7,000 posts and initiation of action on zero-budgeting. Institutional reform measures already taken include setting up of an Electricity Regulatory Commission to oversee reforms in the Power Sector, setting up of a Utility Regulatory Commission for the Water sector, announcement of a New Road Policy with emphasis on privatisation & cost recovery measures, setting up of a Road Fund in the Transport Sector and an Infrastructure Initiative Fund for the development of the Industrial sector.

(d) The reform measures being undertaken would help to strengthen UPs financial position in the long term.

Survey on Consumer Expenditure

1374. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether five yearly Survey regarding consumer expenditure was due to be conducted in 1999-2000; year-wise and district-wise details of families living below poverty lino in Himachal Pradesh during the last five years;

(b) the measures taken by Government for the upliftment of these families; and

(c) the impact of the measures and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The survey has been conducted for the period July, 1999 to June, 2000. The Planning Commission estimates the percentage of persons living below the poverty line at national and state level from the large sample surveys on consumer expenditure conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) at an interval of approximately five years. The last such survey was conducted in 1993-94. As such, the estimates of percentage of people living below the poverty line in Himachal Pradesh for the last five years are not available. These are also not available at district level at NSS consumer *expenditure* data arc not available at district level. As per the latest available estimate, 28.44% of the people lived below the poverty *line in* Himachal Pradesh in 1993-94. There is a three-pronged action to alleviate and reduce the poverty in the country including the State Himachal Pradesh. These are (a) acceleration of economic growth, (b) human, and social development through literacy, education, health, nutrition, meeting of the minimum needs, elevation of social and economic status of the weaker sections of the society, etc., and (c) direct attack on poverty through employment and income generating programmes and assets-building for the poor.

Infrastructure development in North-East

1375. SHRI W. ANGOU *SINGH:* Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have contemplated to allot fund during Ninth Five Year Plan to bring up development of the North-Eastern States in equalising with the national average regarding infrastructure development;

(b) if so, in which areas stress have been given in each State; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Balanced regional development is an essential component of the Indian